

Jacob & Joseph

EMBLEMS OF GOD'S SOVEREIGN GRACE

READING GUIDE

Dear Providence,

We are preaching through the lives of Jacob and Joseph this summer (Genesis 25-50). The stories found in these chapters are full of gospel implications, history, theology, and insights into our own lives. We would love for you to read along as we go through this series, and we want to help you dig into each chapter. That's what this guide is about. It's a simple plan for reading, studying, and reflecting on the scriptures.

Each week there will be three touch points before the Sunday sermon. What day you do each touch point doesn't matter, as long as you focus on the assigned chapter for that week. Here's the flow for each week:

Day 1: Read the chapter.

Day 2: Read the chapter and answer a few questions designed to help dig deeper in the text.

Day 3: Read the chapter and answer a few questions designed to help you reflect and apply what you are learning personally.

Following Sunday: Come to gathered worship on Sunday and hear the pastors teach on the chapter you have studied throughout the week.

Our prayer is that this guide would help you meditate on the word of God this summer and that the story of Jacob and Joseph would be read and seen in a fresh way.

The Providence Staff

DAY ONE READ GENESIS 25-27

DAY TWO STUDY

1. Genesis 25:19-34 is the story of Esau and his birthright. Why does Esau sell his inheritance to Jacob? Where else do we see this brotherly dynamic in Genesis? In the Bible?
2. In ch. 26 the Lord appears to Isaac. Why does God bless Isaac? What is the significance of Abraham's obedience in regards to Isaac?
3. Jacob is blessed by Isaac in ch. 27. How does Jacob get this blessing? Why is Rebekah involved in the deception of Isaac? What does this story reveal about Jacob's character?

DAY THREE REFLECT

1. Imagine you are Esau: returning from an exhausting day working outside, hungry, and ready to rest. How would you respond to Jacob when he demands your birthright for some stew? What would compel you to sell your birthright like that? Why would this cause you to despise your birthright (v. 34b)?
2. Isaac's blessing comes from Abraham's obedience, which has been counted towards Isaac. How would the knowledge of being blessed by someone else's obedience change the way you lived? How does this apply to us as Christians?

DAY ONE READ GENESIS 28-29

DAY TWO STUDY

1. Why is Jacob sent out of Canaan?
2. What do you see in these chapters of God affirming the same promises of Abraham now attributed to Isaac?
3. Last week we saw the deception of Jacob. What do we see in his character in these two chapters? Where do we see deception played out in the narrative of these chapters? How is it different than ch. 25-27?

DAY THREE REFLECT

1. God remains faithful to his promises towards Jacob, but we also see the pain and responsibility that Jacob endured because of his own sin. How does personal responsibility and God's faithfulness play out in your own life?
2. Jacob is the first person to hear the reassurance from God that "I am with you." As Christians we have that same assurance. How does that encourage and comfort you?
3. Despite Jacob and Laban's brokenness and sin, we see that God was still faithful to fulfill his promises through them. What brokennesses are you aware of in your own life, and what longings does that create in you? What would it look like for you to trust in God with your longings?

DAY ONE READ GENESIS 30-31

DAY TWO STUDY

1. Describe Laban and Jacob's relationship. How is this indicative of Jacob's relationships with others?
2. God sent Jacob out of Canaan as an exile and then God calls him out of exile. Where else do we see this in the Old Testament? What is the significance?
3. In 31:25, Laban overtakes Jacob in a tense scene, but then they make a covenant together, bringing reconciliation. What is the relationship between reconciliation and covenant?

DAY THREE REFLECT

1. We see Jacob's exile as ultimately God's discipline in his life. Where have you experienced God's discipline in your own life?
2. Though Laban and Jacob are reconciled, Jacob still has deep conflict with his brother, Esau. Where does reconciliation need to take place for you?
3. Deception and lies characterize many of these biblical heroes, yet God remains faithful in bringing about good. How can you attest to God's faithfulness in the midst of your own sin and selfishness?

DAY ONE READ GENESIS 32-35

DAY TWO STUDY

1. Jacob seems to be fearful about seeing Esau again. What stands out to you about how Jacob responds in vs. 9? What does he appeal to in his prayer?
2. Jacob wrestles with a man and asks for a blessing, and the man asks Jacob's name. Jacob gives his name, which means "cheater." What's the significance of this? What does his new name (Israel) mean?
3. Jacob and Esau meet right after this. How does their reunion signify a shift in both of them—Jacob (in his deception) and Esau (in his anger)?
4. Ch. 34 is tragic in the actions done to Dinah. How does the response of the Jacob's sons embody the family of Jacob? Despite this, God remains with them. How is this seen in ch. 35, and what is Jacob's response?

DAY THREE REFLECT

1. In times of fear and anxiety, what about God's nature can we take hope and strength in?
2. Imagine being in the place of Jacob as he wrestles God, and God asks you who you are ... how would answer? What do you need to confess in light of that?
3. In the same away that lies and deception seem to mark the family of Jacob, what habits in your life need to be conformed to the will of God?

DAY ONE READ GENESIS 36-38

DAY TWO STUDY

1. Genesis, specifically in ch. 36, spends a lot of time on genealogy. Why do you think this important?
2. What were the two dreams that Joseph had, and why did his family react the way they did?
3. Again we see deception as a key theme in the family of Jacob. How does Judah compromise, and how is he deceived?

DAY THREE REFLECT

1. Joseph relates his dreams to his family in what appears to be an arrogant way, revealing that his family would inevitably “bow” to him. What do we learn here about Joseph relationally, and how do we do this same thing?
2. Ch. 37 seems to mark a series of unexpected events of suffering in the midst of a sovereign God. How does God’s sovereignty challenge and comfort us in times of suffering?
3. Through these three chapters, Judah stands out as disobedient and morally bankrupt, yet God includes him in his redemptive action (as we will see in ch. 49). In what ways do you feel inadequate participating in the mission of God? What would it look like to depend on God in your feelings of inadequacy?

DAY ONE READ GENESIS 39-41

DAY TWO STUDY

1. What led to Joseph finding favor in the eyes of Pharaoh? What led to Joseph's imprisonment?
2. In spite of Joseph's integrity, he is both imprisoned and forgotten. Yet, after years of injustice, Joseph was still hopeful (not resentful) when Pharaoh asks for his interpretation of his dream. Through all this, what stands out to you about Joseph's dependence on God?

DAY THREE REFLECT

1. How do we as Christians lose sight of our blessing in Christ? What can we learn from Joseph in remembering our inheritance and blessing from God?
2. It says many times that God blessed Joseph, yet this doesn't always lead to his prosperity. What do you picture when you think of God's blessings? How does this story challenge that?
3. God formed Joseph during his slavery and imprisonment. In what ways has God formed you in hard seasons?
4. Joseph deeply trusted in God's providence throughout his hard seasons. What promises of God do you hold onto in seasons marked by suffering?

DAY ONE READ GENESIS 42-44

DAY TWO STUDY

1. How does Joseph react to seeing his brothers? What does he tell them to do?
2. Why does Joseph continually test his brothers in these chapters?
3. Joseph draws himself away and weeps as his “compassion grew warm for his brother.” Why were his emotions seemingly changing towards his brothers?

DAY THREE REFLECT

1. Joseph deceives and manipulates his brothers at first. Where have you seen pain and resentment negatively affect relationships in your own life?
2. In the end, we see that Joseph’s belief in God’s sovereignty keeps him from bitterness. Where do you need to trust God’s sovereignty to heal past or present bitterness in your life?
3. What would it look like for you to draw near to those who have wronged you? What would it cost you? How does the gospel compel us to do so?

DAY ONE READ GENESIS 45-47

DAY TWO STUDY

1. Ch. 45 is the climax of Joseph's story—he reveals himself to his brothers. What do they fear immediately after Joseph reveals himself? How does Joseph deal with his brother's past sin?
2. After Joseph is reconciled with his brothers, he sees his father again. In the beginning of ch. 46 God speaks to Israel (Jacob). How are God's blessings still seen? What do we see of God's faithfulness?
3. How did Jacob's request to be buried in Canaan (47:29-30) serve as a testimony to his faith?

DAY THREE REFLECT

1. How do you see characteristics of Christ in the story of Joseph? How do these parallels apply to our lives?
2. The sovereignty of God over the sinful actions of humans is clearly seen in these chapters. Spend some time in prayer thanking God for his sovereignty, confessing how we have rebelled against him, and asking that we would walk in light of the gospel of reconciliation.

DAY ONE READ GENESIS 48-50

DAY TWO STUDY

1. How is the promised blessing of Israel passed onto the descendants of Joseph in ch. 48?
2. What stands out to you from the prophetic blessings of Jacob to his sons in ch. 49? Specifically, what do you see in Judah's prophecy?
3. After the death of Jacob, Joseph's brothers are fearful of the wrath of Joseph. What does Joseph say in response?

DAY THREE REFLECT

1. Jesus came from the line of Judah, which seems odd that our Savior would come from a man who did so much wrong. What does this reveal about God's plan for us as broken people?
2. What are some of your main takeaways from the stories of Jacob and Joseph?
3. Spend some time praying that God's kingdom would come and that his will would be done in and through your life.



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